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EPISTLE

TO THE

CHURCHES OF JESUS,

THROUGHOUT THE WORLD,

GATHERED AND SETTLED IN HIS ETERNAL

LIGHT, POWER, AND SPIRIT,

TO BE

ONE HOLY FLOCK, FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD

TO THE LORD.

BY WENDLE [illegible]

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WILLIAM PENN'S EPISTLE

TO THE

CHURCHES OF JESUS

THROUGHOUT THE WORLD,

GATHERED AND SETTLED IN HIS ETERNAL LIGHT, POWER, AND SPIRIT, TO BE ONE HOLY FLOCK, FAMILY, AND HOUSEHOLD TO THE LORD.

"Dear Friends and Brethren,

"WHO have been visited with the fatherly visitation from on high, and have received God's eternal word and testament in your hearts, by which you have been gathered home to Christ Jesus, the true Shepherd, from all the idol-shepherds, and their barren mountains and unprofitable hills; where you have been scattered in the dark and gloomy day of apostasy; and by his light, Spirit, and power have been convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and can say, the prince of this world is judged by HIS holy, righteous, and powerful appearance in you, unto whom all judgment in heaven and earth is committed; who is the blessed Lamb of God, the Light and Saviour of the world; who is King of Salem, and Prince of Peace:—my soul loves you with everlasting love, even with the love with which my God and your God, my Father and your Father hath loved me, and visited my soul and your souls; in this, do I dearly salute and embrace you all, in this the day of the fulfilling of his glorious promises to his church in the wilderness, and witnesses in sackcloth.

"And, O magnified be his name, and everlastingly praised and renowned be his holy power and arm, by which he hath reached unto us, and brought salvation near us! For he hath found us out, and hath heard our solitary cries, the deep and mournful supplications of our bowed spirits, when we were as the little silly dove without its mate, and the lonely pelican in the wilderness; when we were ready to cry out, Is there none to save, is there none to help! O when shall the time and times and half a time be finished! When shall the one thousand two hundred and sixty days be accomplished! And when shall the abomination, that stands in the holy place, be cast out! When shall the captivity of the people be turned back! O when shall Babylon come into remembrance before God; the dragon, beast, and false prophet be cast into the lake! And when shall the law go forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem! When shall Zion become the joy, and Jerusalem the praise of the whole earth! And when shall the earth be covered with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea!

"Friends, the Lord of heaven and earth hath heard our cries, and the full time is come, yea, the appointed time is come, and the voice of the Eternal Spirit in our hearts hath been heard on this wise many a time: *Awake thou that sleepest, and I will give thee life: arise out of the dust, and shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee!* And the Lord God hath given us that light, by which we have comprehended the darkness in ourselves and in the world: and as we have believed in it, dwelt in it, and walked in it, we have received power to overcome the evil one in all his appearances in ourselves, and faithfully and

boldly to testify against him in the world. And the blood of Jesus, in this holy way of the light, have we felt in our souls, to cleanse us from unrighteousness; and give us to know the mystery of the fellowship of the gospel one with another, which stands in life and immortality. And here we become an holy household and family unto God, that live in his presence day and night, to do his will, as becometh his children, redeemed and ransomed by the most precious blood of his Son, and no more to return to folly.

"And, Friends, *let it never pass out of our remembrance, what our God hath done for us, since he hath made us a people:* hath any weapon formed against us prospered? Hath he called us, and not protected us? Hath he given power to conceive, and not to bring forth? Hath he not sheltered us in many a storm? Did he ever leave us under the reproaches and contradictions of men? Nay, hath he not spoken peace to us? Were we ever cast out by men, and he forsook us? No, the Lord hath taken us up. Were we ever in prison, and he visited us not? hungry, and he fed us not? naked, and he clothed us not? or have we been sick, and he came not to see us? When were the gaols so close, that he could not come in? and the dungeons so dark that he caused not his light to shine upon us? O nay! he hath never left us, nor forsaken us; yea, he hath provided richly for us; he hath brought us into the wilderness, not to starve us, but to try us; yet not above our measure: for he fed us with manna from on high, with pure honey and water out of the rock, and gave his good Spirit to sustain us: by night he was a pillar of fire to us, to comfort us; and by day a pillar of cloud, to hide and shelter us. He was a shadow

of a mighty rock, that followed us; and we never wanted a brook by the way to refresh us. Was God good to Israel *outward?* Much more hath he abounded to his *spiritual* Israel, the proper seed and offspring of himself. O the noble deeds and valiant acts, that he hath wrought in *our* day for our deliverance! He hath caused one to chase ten, and ten a hundred, and a hundred a thousand many a time. None hath been able to snatch us out of his hands, who abode in his Truth. For though the winds have blown, and the sea hath raged, yet hath he rebuked the winds and the sea for his seed's sake: he hath said to the winds, 'Be still;' and to the sea, 'Thus far shalt thou come, and no further.' He hath cast up a highway for his ransomed to walk in, so plain, that, though a fool, he shall not err therein. *This is the light, in which all nations of them that are saved must walk for ever.*

"And therefore, Friends, let us stay our minds in the light of the Lord for ever; and let the awe, fear, and dread of the Almighty dwell in us. And let his Holy Spirit be known to be a covering to us, that from the spirit of this world we may be chastely kept and preserved unto God, in the holy light and self-denying life of Jesus, who hath offered up himself once for all, leaving us an example that we should also follow his steps; that as he, our dear Lord and Master, so we his servants, and friends, and children, might by the Eternal Spirit offer up ourselves to God in body, in soul, and in spirit, which are his; that we may be his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, to the praise of him that hath called us;—which calling is a high and a holy calling, by the Eternal Light and Spirit in our con-

sciences. O that it might for ever remain in high estimation with us! And that it may be the daily watch and travail of us all, in the presence of the holy and living God who hath called us, to make our great call and election sure,—which many have neglected to do, (who have been convinced by the blessed light and Truth of Christ Jesus revealed in their hearts, and who for a time have walked among us;)—these have been overcome by the spirit of this world, and turned their hands from the plough, and deserted the camp of the Lord, and gone back again into Egypt; whereby the heathen have blasphemed, and the way and people of the Lord have greatly suffered.

"Therefore, O my dear Friends and brethren! in the sense of that life and power, that God from heaven so gloriously hath dispensed among us, and by which he hath given us multiplied assurances of his loving-kindness unto us, and crowned us together with heavenly dominion, in which my spirit is at this time broken before the Lord,—do I most earnestly entreat you to watch continually, lest any of you, that have tasted of the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, fall by temptation; and by carelessness and neglect tempt the living God to withdraw his fatherly visitation from any of you, and finally to desert such: for the Lord our God is a jealous God, and he will not give his glory unto another. He hath given to man *all but man himself*, and him he hath reserved for his own peculiar service, to build him up a glorious temple to Himself; so that we are bought with a price, and we are not our own.

"Therefore let us continually watch, and stand in awe, that we grieve not his Holy Spirit, nor turn

his grace into wantonness: but, all of us, let us wait, and that in a holy travail of spirit, to know ourselves sealed by the Spirit of adoption, unto the day of our complete redemption; when not only all our sins, but all sorrows, sighings, and tears shall be wiped away from our eyes; and everlasting songs of joy and thanksgivings shall melodiously fill our hearts to God, that sits upon the throne, and to his blessed, immaculate Lamb, who by his most precious blood shall have completely redeemed us from the earth, and written our names in the book of life.

"Friends, the Spirit of the Lord hath often brought you into my remembrance, since I have been in this desolate land; and with joy unutterable have I had sweet and precious fellowship with you in the faith of Jesus, that overcometh the world:—for, though absent in body, yet present in Him that is Omnipresent. And I can truly say, you are very near and very dear unto me; and the love that God hath raised in my heart unto you, surpasses the love of women. And our testimony, I am well satisfied, is sealed up together. And I am well assured, that all that love the light, shall endure to the end throughout all tribulations, and in the end obtain eternal salvation.

"And now, Friends, as I have been travelling in this dark and solitary land, the great work of the Lord in the earth has been often presented unto my view, and the day of the Lord hath been deeply upon me, and my soul and spirit hath frequently been possessed with a holy and weighty concern for the glory of the name of the Lord, and the spreading of his everlasting Truth, and the prosperity of it through all nations; that the very ends of the earth may look to him, and may know

Christ, the Light, to be given to them for their salvation. And when the sense of these things hath been deeply upon me, a holy and strong cry God hath raised in my soul to him, *that we, who have known this fatherly visitation from on high, and who have beheld the day of the Lord, the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, who is full of grace, and full of truth, and have beheld his glory, and confessed it to be the glory of the only begotten Son of God; and who by obedience to his appearance are become the children of light, and of the day, and as the first-fruits to God after this long night of apostasy,—might for ever walk and dwell in his holy covenant, Christ Jesus, the Light of the world; because in him we have always peace, but out of him comes all the trouble.*

"And whilst this heavenly sense rested with me, the Lord God, that made me, and called me by his grace unto salvation, laid it upon me, to visit you in a holy exhortation. And it is the exhortation of my life at this time, in the earnest and fervent motion of the power and Spirit of Jesus, to beseech you all, who are turned to the light of Christ, that shineth in your hearts, and believe in it; that you carefully and faithfully walk in it, in the same dread, awe, and fear, in which you began; that that holy poverty of spirit, which is precious in the eyes of the Lord, and was in the days of your first love, may dwell and rest with you; that you may daily feel the same heavenly hunger and thirst, the same lowliness and humility of mind, the same zeal and tenderness, and the same sincerity and love unfeigned; that God may fill you out of his heavenly treasure with the riches of life, and crown you with holy victory and dominion over the god and spirit of this world: that your alpha may be your

omega, and your author your finisher, and your first love your last love; that so none may make shipwreck of faith, and of a good conscience, nor faint by the way. And, as in this state we are kept, in holy watchfulness to God, as in the beginning; the table which our Heavenly Father spreads, and the blessings with which he compasseth us about, shall not become a snare unto us, nor shall we turn the grace and mercies of the Lord into wantonness; but we shall eat and drink in a holy fear, apparel ourselves in fear, buy and sell in fear, visit one another in fear, keep meetings, and there wait upon the Lord in fear; yea, whatsoever we take in hand to do, it shall be in the holy fear of God, and with a holy tenderness of his glory, and regard to the prosperity of his Truth: yea, we shall deny ourselves, not only in the unlawful things, but in the things that are even lawful to us, for the sake of the many millions that are unconverted to God.

"For, my Friends and brethren, God hath laid upon us, whom he hath honoured with the beginning of his great work in the world, the care both of this age, and of the ages to come; that they may walk, as they have us for examples:—yea, the Lord God hath chosen you to place his name in you; the Lord hath intrusted you with his glory, that you might hold it forth to all nations; and that the generations unborn may call you blessed.

"Therefore, let none be treacherous to the Lord, nor reward him evil for good; nor betray his cause directly by wilful wickedness, nor indirectly by negligence and unfaithfulness: but be zealous and valiant for Truth on earth; let none be slothful or careless:—O! remember the slothful servant's state. And let the loving-kindness of the Lord overcome every soul to faithfulness; for with him

are riches and honour, and every good thing. And whither should any go? He hath the words of eternal life. *O! let none lose their testimony, but hold it up for God; let thy gift be ever so small, thy testimony ever so little.* Through thy whole conversation bear it for God; and be true to what thou art convinced of. And wait all upon the Lord, that you may grow in your heavenly testimony; that life may fill your hearts, your houses, and your meetings; that you may daily wait to know, and to receive power to do the will of God on earth, as it is in heaven.

"And O! that *the cross of Jesus* may be in high and honourable esteem with every one; that the liberty of all may stand in the cross, which alone preserveth: for it is the power of God, that crucifieth us to the world, and the world to us. And through death, way is made unto life and immortality; which by this blessed cross, the gospel, the power, is brought to light. So shall the seed of life that God hath sown in our hearts, grow; and in that seed shall we all come to be blessed, unto whom God hath appointed the dominion over us. And it is good for all to live under the holy government of it; for the ways of it are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace; and all that are born of it, can say, Thy sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness. And O! that all Friends everywhere, may continually bow unto his righteous sceptre, and keep to his holy law, which is written in their hearts; that it may be a light to their feet, and a lantern to their paths. So shall they come to witness that holy promise made good unto them, That the Spirit which I have given unto him, the Seed; and the words which I have put into his mouth, shall not depart from him, nor from his

seed, nor from his seed's seed unto all generations. Isaiah, lix. 21.

"Wherefore, Friends, redeem the time, because the days are evil;—God hath given you to see they are so: and be ye separated more and more, yea, perfectly disentangled from the cares of this world. And be ye not cumbered with the many things; but stand loose from the things that are seen, which are temporal.

"And you that are poor, murmur not; but be patient, and trust in the Lord, and submit to his providence, and he will provide for you, that which is convenient for the days of your appointed time. And you that are rich, keep in the moderation, and strive not to multiply earthly treasure, nor to heap up uncertain riches to yourselves; but what God hath given you more than what is convenient for your own use, wait for his wisdom, to employ it for his glory; that you may be faithful stewards of this world's mammon; and the Lord God shall reward you into your bosoms, of the riches of that kingdom that shall never have an end.

"O my Friends and brethren! whether rich or poor, in bonds or at liberty, in whatsoever state you are, the salutation of the universal life of Jesus is to you. And the exhortation is, *to bow to what is made known unto you;* and in the light, by which ye have received in measure the knowledge of God, watch and wait diligently to the further revelation of the mind and will of God unto you; that ye may be endued from on high with power and might in your inward man, to answer the call and requirings of the Lord; that ye may be enabled to make known to the nations, what is the riches of the glory of this blessed mystery in the Gentiles; which is *Christ Jesus, the light of the world, in you*

the hope of glory. For, this I have to tell you in the vision of the Almighty,—that the day of the breaking up of the nations about you, and of the sounding of the gospel-trumpet unto the inhabitants of the earth, is just at the door: and they that are worthy, who have kept their habitation from the beginning, and have dwelt in the unity of the faith that overcometh the world, and have kept the bond of peace, the Lord God will empower and spirit you to go forth with his everlasting word and testament, to awaken and gather kindreds, languages, and people to the glory of the rising of the Gentiles' Light; who is God's salvation unto the ends of the earth.

"And I must tell you, that there is a breathing, hungering, seeking people, solitarily scattered up and down this great land of Germany, where the Lord hath sent me; and I believe it is the like in other nations. And as the Lord hath laid it upon me, with my companions, to seek some of them out, so have we found several in divers places. And we have had many blessed opportunities amongst them, wherein our hearts have greatly rejoiced; having been made deeply sensible of the love of God towards them, and of the great openness and tenderness of spirit in them, to receive the testimony of light and life through us. And we have a steadfast belief, that the Lord will carry on his work in this land effectually; and that he will raise up those, that shall be as ministers of his eternal testament amongst them. And O! our desire is, that God would put it into the hearts of many of his faithful witnesses, to visit the inhabitants of this country, where God hath a great seed of people to be gathered; that his work may go on in the earth, till the whole earth be filled with his glory.

"And it is under the deep and weighty sense of this approaching work, that the Lord God hath laid it upon me, to write to you, to wait for the further pourings out of the power and Spirit of the Lord; that nothing which is careless, sleepy, earthly, or exalted, may get up, whereby to displease the Lord, and cause him to withdraw his sweet and preserving presence from any that know him. But let all keep the peace of the King of Righteousness, and walk in the steps of the flocks of his companions: for withering and destruction shall come upon all such as desert the camp of the Lord, or with their murmuring spirit disquiet the heritage of God; for they are greater enemies to Zion's glory, and Jerusalem's peace, than the open armies of the aliens.

"And it is a warning to all, who make mention of the name of the Lord in this dispensation he hath brought us to, that they have a care, how they let out their minds in any wise to please the lusts of the eye, the lusts of the flesh, and the pride of life, which are not of the Father, but of this world; lest any be exalted in a liberty, that maketh the cross of Jesus of none effect, and the offence thereof to cease: for such will become as salt that hath lost its savour, and at last will be trodden under the feet of God and men. For, the Lord will withdraw his daily presence, and the fountain will come to be sealed up, and the well of salvation be stopped again.

"Therefore, as all would rejoice in the joy of God's salvation, let them wait for the saving power, and dwell in it; that, knowing the mystery of the work of regeneration,—*Christ formed in them the hope of their glory*,—they may be able in the motion of him, that hath begotten them through death

to life, to go forth and declare the way of life and salvation.

"And all you that are young, convinced of the eternal Truth,—*Come into it, and then you will feel the virtue of it:* and so, you will be witnesses, otherwise vain talkers, wells without water, clouds without rain; for which state, is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. Wherefore, gird up the loins of your minds, and be sober, and tempt not God; but receive the day of your visitation, and walk worthy of so great love, and delight to retain God in your knowledge; and grieve not his Holy Spirit, but join to it, and be led by it, that it may be an earnest to you of an eternal inheritance. And take up your daily cross and follow Christ, and not the spirit of this world. He was meek and lowly, he was humble and plain; he was few in words, but mighty in deeds. He loved not his life unto death, even the reproachful death of the cross; but laid down his life, and became of no reputation,—and that, for the rebellious. O the height, and the depth, the length, and the breadth,—yea, the unsearchableness of the love of God in Christ Jesus.

"Wherefore, while it is to-day, hearken to his voice, and harden not your hearts: and make no bargains for yourself, neither consult with flesh and blood; but let the Lord be your light, and your salvation; let him be the strength of your life, and the length of your days. And this know assuredly,—that none ever trusted to the Lord, and were confounded. Wherefore, hold up your testimony for God, as ye would enjoy the increasings of his life and love; and let your light shine, and confess him before the whole world. Smother not his appearance, neither hide thy candle, God hath lighted in

thee, under a bushel; for Christ walketh among his candlesticks of pure and tried gold. Wherefore, set thy light upon a candlestick, and show forth thy good conversation in meekness and godly fear, that thou mayst become a good example; and others, beholding thy good works, may glorify God. But—for the rebellious, the fearful, and the unbelieving, the day hastens upon such, that the things that belong to their eternal peace, shall be hid from their eyes for ever.

"And all you, my dear Friends and brethren, who are in sufferings for the testimony of Jesus, and a good conscience, look up to Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Father in the heavenly place:—into which, if you faint not, you shall all be received, after the days of your pilgrimage shall be at an end, with a 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'—And though these afflictions seem not joyous, but grievous for the present; yet a far more exceeding weight of glory stands at the door. Wherefore, count it all joy when you fall into these trials, and persevere to the end; knowing, He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry,—and that his reward is with him. Remember the martyrs of Jesus, that loved not their lives to the death, for his namesake, who had called them. And Jesus himself, that made a good confession before Pontius Pilate; who hath consecrated through his blood a new and living way for all that come unto God by him; who is made a High-priest, higher than the heavens,—one that can be touched and moved, and is daily touched and moved with our weakness and infirmity;—that through him we may be made

strong in the Lord, and more than conquerors through him that hath loved us.

"Wherefore, let it not seem as if some strange thing had happened to you; for all these things are for the trial of your faith, which is more precious than the gold that perisheth. It is the old quarrel;—children of this world, against the children of the Lord; those that are born after the flesh, warring against those that are born after the Spirit; Cain against Abel, the old world against Noah, Sodomites against Lot, Hagar against Sarah, Ishmael against Isaac, Esau against Jacob, Egyptians against Israelites, the false prophets against the true prophets, as Isaiah, Jeremiah, &c. the Jews, under the profession of the letter of the law, against Christ, that came to fulfil the law, and all his spiritual followers and disciples: and all the false apostate Christians, against the true and spiritual Christians and martyrs of Jesus. So, *your conflict is for the spiritual appearance of Christ Jesus* against those that profess him in words, but in works and conversation every day deny him; doing despite to the spirit of grace in themselves, and those that are led by it. But though Gog and Magog shall gather themselves together to lay waste the city of God; yet the Lord hath determined their destruction, and he will bring it to pass.

"*Wherefore rejoice, O thou little hill of God, and clap thy hands for joy; for He that is* FAITHFUL AND TRUE, *just and righteous, and able to deliver thee,* DWELLS IN THE MIDST OF THEE: *who will cause thee to grow and increase, till thou become a great mountain, till thou become the praise of the whole earth, and the whole earth be filled with thy glory!*

"And to you all, who are the followers of the Lamb of God, who was dead, but is alive, and lives

for evermore,—who is risen in your hearts, as a bright shining light, and is leading you out of the nature and spirit of this world, in the path of regeneration,—I have this to say, by way of holy encouragement unto you all;—*The Lord God eternal that was, and is, and is to come, hath reserved for you the glories of the last days. And if the followers and martyrs of Jesus in ages past, when the church was going into the wilderness, and his witnesses into sackcloth, were, notwithstanding, so noble and valiant for the Truth on earth, that they loved not their lives unto the death, and suffered joyfully the spoiling of their goods for the testimony of Jesus;—how much more ought you all to be encouraged unto faithfulness, who are come to the resurrection of the day, which shall never more be eclipsed; in which the Bridegroom is to come, to fetch you his spouse out of the wilderness, to give you beauty for ashes, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; who will cover you with his Spirit, and adorn you with his fine linen, the righteousness of the saints.—Lean upon His breast for ever! and know your joining in an everlasting covenant with him, that he may lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and delight to do you good;—that in blessing he may bless you, increase you, and multiply you in all spiritual blessings now and for ever; that to God, through him, you may live all the days of your appointed time:—to whom be glory and honour, praises and thanksgivings in the church, throughout all ages, and for ever!*

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